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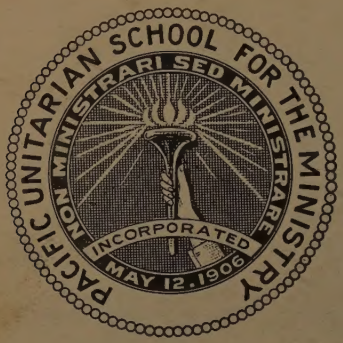

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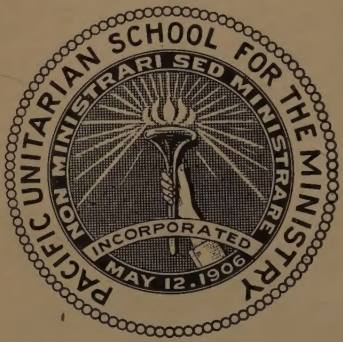

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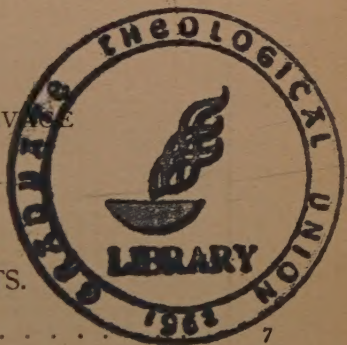
141 Franklin St., Boston, Mass.

FOUR GREAT QUESTIONS

BY

MINOT J. SAVAGE



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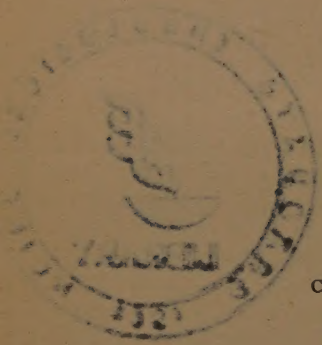

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A FORE-WORD.

I love a good story. So I can find no fault with the traveller who beguiles his journey by listening to the tellers of fascinating tales, or with weary workers who seek for mental recreation at home.

But it is believed that among the thousands who read there are many who would like to vary their mental occupation by sometimes turning from the story to something that offers help along serious lines of thought.

People do care; and they are willing to think. This is an age of questioning. The world's growth is the cause of the uncertainty. Men and women want to find peace for both head and heart.

Here is what one man thinks concerning some matters of great consequence. He modestly offers it to those who care for it.

M. J. S.

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CAN WE THINK GOD?

I HAVE taken as my subject for to-day, not comprehending God, not even understanding God, but *thinking God;* and my purpose plainly and simply is this,—to do what I can to help those, who are troubled in their thinking, to gain some rational thought about the divine in the universe and in our human life. For there are thousands of persons who seem overwhelmed by the immensity of the universe, and who wonder if the position of the agnostic be not the only reasonable one. They find it impossible to frame any satisfactory thought of God; and they question whether it be not the best thing to stop thinking about him at all, and confine themselves purely to the secular aspects of life.

My purpose, as I say, is to do what I can to help this class of thinkers over their difficulty.

What sort of thought shall we try to think about God?

TWO KINDS OF DIFFICULTIES.

There are two classes of difficulties in the way,—one moral, the other intellectual. It would make the theme too large to be dealt with in one

morning, should I attempt to cover the whole ground. So, to-day, please note that I waive one side entirely the moral difficulties that stand in the way of belief in God, and propose to deal purely with the intellectual difficulties. Another day I will devote myself to trying to clear away the moral objections.

NO DIFFICULTY IN THE EARLY WORLD.

If we go back far enough in the history of mankind, we come to a time when this thought about God was not difficult. The reason is obvious. In the old days, in the earliest conditions of the religious life of which we can find any clear traces, people lived together in tribes or clans. Their moral and religious life was limited by the boundary of the clan; and, literally, their god was a member of the clan, as much as their earthly chief. He was, indeed, generally invisible, though he sometimes manifested himself, as they believed; and, being invisible and mightier than other members, he was clothed with certain mysterious and, therefore, awful powers. But they thought of him as like themselves, and consequently had no sort of intellectual difficulty in comprehending him. He was moved by the same passions, touched by the same motives, angry for the same causes, and appeased by the same means.

STEPS UP THE AGES.

If we take a step beyond this mere tribal or clan condition of humanity, and come to that represented by the first part of our Scripture reading this morning (Gen. xxxi. 30–35), we shall find a stage in which there was still no difficulty on the part of the people in thinking about their gods. It is a very naïve and interesting relation to find so late in the history of the world. Here is Jacob, who has been serving fourteen years for Laban as the hire for the two sisters who became his wives. He is on the eve of his departure; and Rachel steals her father's gods to carry home with her. The gods were little images. Perhaps in their more spiritual moments they did not limit the god to these images; but they were so vitally connected with the gods that, if one possessed the images, he was sure of their presence and their help. And so she thought by stealing them, and concealing them in the camel furniture and sitting upon them, that she could carry them home with her to her new country, and so have with her all the advantage of the presence of her father's gods. There was no special difficulty in an age of the world like that in thinking about God.

Let us take another step, and see if the difficulty grows too great for human comprehension. Come to the time of the building of Solomon's temple. It is indeed true that in that beautiful prayer which

Solomon is said to have uttered on the occasion of its dedication, but which undoubtedly belongs to a much later period of thought, God is spoken of as he who inhabits eternity, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; and the question is suggested whether he would deign to come and dwell in a temple made with hands. But they had no sort of question that he would come and dwell in the temple made with hands. And so, literally, during the time of the existence of Solomon's temple, it was believed and taught that God did manifest himself by a bright cloud, the shekinah, a glory dwelling between the cherubim above the ark, on the mercy-seat in the holy of holies, in the innermost of the temple. It was easy enough in those days to think about God.

Take still another step. In the popular mind, at the time when Jesus came, it was a question whether God dwelt generally or most acceptably, most really, on Mount Gerizim or on Mount Moriah. The people had no sort of question that he might be approached in either one place or the other. He was not far off in the heavens exclusively, but dwelt on the earth at a place where he could be found and his presence approached. It is indeed true that there had been glorious premonitions on the part of the prophets, long before this time, of the higher, spiritual, universal nature of the Eternal One; and Jesus utters a thought that in one sense has not yet been surpassed, when he says

that "God is Spirit." He is not to be found exclusively here, not to be found exclusively there: he is to be found by the pure in heart, the spiritual worshipper, anywhere, everywhere. But the early mind was not up to any such conception as this. If we come down to the Middle Ages and the time of Dante, we shall find that Dante teaches, indeed, that God dwells in a light that no man can approach unto; but they who attain the felicity of Paradise might come to a point in space where, blinded by the ineffable light, they might catch far-off gleams of the beatific vision, and know that there was God.

Since Dante's time, how has it been? Through the larger part of the history of the Church has it not been true that to most people it has been easy to think of God, because that thought has clothed him with a personality very much like our own? He has been thought of, as Matthew Arnold says, as a "non-natural and magnified man," somewhere on a throne, so that by travelling through space we could go to the foot of that throne, could find him, could see him with the same eyes with which to-day we behold the stars. The only difficulty was in reaching that place. I remember, and I feel sure that you all remember equally well, that during childhood — I suppose I imbibed it from the natural thought and feeling around me — it never occurred to me to think otherwise than that God was somewhere not very far away, visible, a being out-

lined, who might be found if I could only travel to his presence. This, I say, has been the thought of the world in the past concerning God.

THE DIFFICULTY COMES OF GROWTH.

But now we have come to a time when it is intellectually impossible for the educated and thoughtful man to hold any longer any least shred or fragment of these old ideas. Since the discovery of the Copernican universe, since the little cycles and epicycles of Ptolemy have dissolved, where are we? We are in a universe that, so far as thinking can go, is infinite.

Let me hint to you just one suggestion from an item which I came across during the last week. An astronomer was asked what was the most remarkable fact discovered in the modern world; and he said that to him it was the fact — I believe I am giving the figures correctly — that the famous Lick observatory in California had revealed to us about a hundred million suns, each of them presumably the centre of a system of worlds like ours. And some of these are so far away that it would take thirty thousand of them grouped together to make a point of light large enough to be visible to the naked eye. I speak of this simply as suggesting the overwhelming infinity of the modern universe. Well may people ask, Where is God, and how shall we think of him? For, if God were sitting on a throne on that star which is nearest to our sun, our

next-door neighbor, it would take a soul, using a ray of light for a chariot, three years and a half to reach his presence,—though he were our next-door neighbor. We must, then, change our conception of God. We must try to get a rational thought of him of another kind. And, to my mind, this thought is all glory, all sweetness, all help, and, I believe, all rationality. The problem, the difficulty, as you will see before I am through, is simply the difficulty, so to speak, growing out of the bigness, the immensity, of the problem. It is simply the difficulty springing from the limitation of our faculties. Let us, then, stand face to face with this modern universe, and see what we can think about it.

THE MODERN UNIVERSE.

This universe, the material part of it, I believe, was never created; that is, it never had a beginning. I am only giving you my judgment. I believe that what we call matter is only a part of the eternal manifestation of what we call spirit. I have already uttered my thought in a way of assumption, perhaps you will think, as to the nature of the universe. But let us stop a moment, and consider it. Here outside of us, enclosing us, is this infinite power,—a power that was here before we were, that will be here after we have gone away, a power that persists through all the countless changes of its manifestation, a power of whose ex-

istence we are so certain that there is nothing else so sure as that. What is the nature of this power that is not ourselves? Is it matter? Is it dead? I cannot argue this point; but I give you the united voice of the intelligent world of modern thought, when I say to you that the best thinkers are agreed that we cannot interpret this power in terms of matter. We are compelled to think of it as spirit, as life. Materialism is crude philosophy to-day, exploded science. This is the utterance of the profoundest philosophers and the most learned scientists of the world.

This infinite power, then, that clothes itself with systems and suns, this power of which all things, including even ourselves, are only phenomenal manifestations, this power is spirit, is life.

THE POWER NOT OURSELVES.

Concede that, and let us take the next step; for here, perhaps, comes the prime difficulty. What have we a right to think about this power? Dare we say this power thinks, this power feels, this power is conscious, this power loves? Dare I think this power knows anything about me? Does this power plan? Does this power manifest itself as purpose? Is it leading the world anywhere? These are the questions that haunt us, and plead for reply. I shall tell you frankly the best thought I can think about it.

A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.

Let us plant ourselves, then, on the fundamental principle of all modern knowledge. If you doubt this fundamental principle, you doubt that which is the basis of all that we know. And, if you carry your doubts so far as that, you must logically doubt your doubt, and confess that nothing, even unbelief, is rational.

What is this fundamental principle of all modern knowledge? It is that life never sprang out of death; that something never came out of nothing; that the stream cannot rise higher than its source; that nothing is ever evolved that was not first involved; that a cause must be at least adequate to the effect. These are the fundamental principles of all that we know; and every added item of knowledge, pushed however far in any direction, only comes forward to confirm the eternal reality of these principles. Standing on these principles, now let us ask a few questions, and see to what answers we are compelled.

THOUGHT AND PLAN.

Does God think? Not perhaps in the way in which you think or I think; for we are accustomed to connect thinking with an organ called the brain. But hold a moment right here. How much do you know about this? We say that thinking is connected with the brain, and some rash philosophers

have gone so far as to speak of thought as the product of the brain; but philosophers and scientists themselves have condemned that as faulty. Thought is not the product of the brain. All we know about it is that thought ordinarily is connected with molecular movements of the brain. But we know nothing about the interior mystic seat of thought; and we do know that the deepest, highest, finest thought has sometimes manifested itself when the brain was most nearly quiescent, and in semi-independence of these molecular movements of the brain. I only speak of this, not to carry it any further, but only to suggest that we do not know quite enough about the nature of our own thought to use it by way of putting a veto on the rightfulness of our saying that God thinks. Grant that he does not "think"; grant that we have no right to measure him by our own selves in this matter. Note this one point. Thought *is*. The power, then, of which thought is a manifestation is not less than thought. The cause is not less than the effect. That which is the cause of thought, that of which thought in us, in the whole human race, is only a manifestation, must be at least equal to thought, however it may transcend it beyond the farthest reach of our imagination. Does God plan? Is there any purpose running through the universe? Undoubtedly, God does not plan in the sense in which we do. He does not estimate obstacles, or devise means or instruments for their overcoming.

Perhaps we can destroy all notion of purpose in the universe, in the antiquated and narrow sense; but, if there be anything certain in regard to human history, it is that there has been a forward movement, growth, trend, tendency, which, from our point of view, we must regard as purpose. This power began somewhere; and so far as this little planet is concerned, this one little, infinitesimal part of the universe, it began thousands of years ago, and there has been an upward sweep of what we must think of as purpose, and it reaches on beyond all we can see, giving promise of something grander still to come. Using human language, then, with the limitation of our way of expressing ourselves, I do not see why we have not the right to think of God as planning,— remembering always that our phrases are inadequate.

CONSCIOUSNESS.

If he thinks, if he plans, of course he is conscious. There are those who hold the theory that the universe outside of man is unconscious; that the only consciousness is in beings like ourselves; that the universe, so to speak, comes to consciousness in humanity. Here, again, we are face to face with what seems to me an inexplicable, irrational contradiction of the law of our fundamental principle, that the unconscious cannot produce consciousness. The cause must be at least as much as the effect; but though we may not say that God is con-

scious, in the same sense that we are, he is as much as that,—yes, infinitely more.

LOVE AND PERSONALITY.

Shall we say that God loves? Perhaps not in the same sense in which we use our human term; and yet love *is*, that tender, marvellous power. Love exists; and that out of which it came cannot be something less, something poorer, something unconscious, something with no element of self-sacrifice in it. We must think of this power that is not ourselves as equal to consciousness, equal to love, equal to thought, equal to plan, and, so far as this view of the theme is concerned, equal to personality. Thousands of people in the modern world are saying, I cannot believe any longer that God is personal. You may not think of him as an outlined being, a person, in the same sense in which we are. But personality again is a fact, is a part of the manifestation of this infinite life and spirit and power; and that which manifests is certainly equal to the manifestation. So God is not something poorer than person, not something less than person, not something narrower, but infinitely above and beyond what we mean by person and yet including it in himself.

THE MORAL IDEAL.

Let us note two other phases of human nature that need to be accounted for. In spite of all the

evil there is in the world, of which I shall take account as I have told you in another sermon, the one most supreme characteristic of human nature is that man is a moral being. This moral impulse, this moral ideal dominating our rough, coarse human life, warning it, lifting it, leading it on forever, — where did this come from? It could not have come from an immoral being, nor even out of an unmoral universe. There can be no such thing as morality unless there be purpose. There must be plan, there must be an ideal, there must be something to be sought after, so that we must think that this is the aim of life, to depart from which is wrong. And the moment you get the moral purpose, plan, ideal, you put purpose, plan, ideal, into the universe as a part of its inherent nature; and so you must think of it as divine.

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE.

Then these spiritual natures of ours, these that link us consciously — for they do — to this power that is not ours; this in us which makes us feel that, though we are animal, we are more; this spiritual nature which manifests itself as mighty enough to conquer death, that dares to look death in the face and smile at it as being not an enemy, but a friend, — this must find its counterpart in this infinite power, of which again it is only a partial expression. We must find answer for all the highest and best in ourselves here in this infinite spiritual life of things.

THE WORD "GOD."

Let us now turn from this phase of the subject to ask one or two other questions, so as to make the treatment of the theme a little more complete. People ask me sometimes why I dare to use the word "God." They say the word "God" was used of those images that Rachel stole; the word "God" was used of the something that was carried by the Israelites in the ark that the Philistines could take away from them in battle; the word "God" was used of the cruel Jehovah who chose one little people and neglected or antagonized the rest of the earth; the word "God" has been used of all sorts of conceptions and ideals, as covering a whole range of images wrought in metal or wood or thought, no matter which. Why, then, try to utter in words the unutterable? I grant he is unutterable. He could not be God, were he not. There would be no rationality in our hoping for a future life, were he not infinite. But what shall I do? Language is poor. I must use the best term I can find. I must remember forever that my speech is no measure of infinite reality. That is all. The word "God" is probably derived from an Anglo-Saxon root that used to stand as the name of a pagan deity; for they tell us now that the old interpretation which finds God and good to be from the same root is incorrect. But it is no matter where the name came from nor what the

name be. It is simply a poor attempt to utter the inexpressible. But is silence better than an inadequate utterance? Suppose I say nature; but nature does not mean so much as God. I use the word "God" for the simple reason that to me it is the best word I can find. I only need to remember that it is inadequate.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

Why try to utter it at all, people say, since all your utterances are anthropomorphic? Well, suppose they are. So long as I am an *anthropos*, a man, all my thoughts about anything must be anthropomorphic. This is just as true of other things as it is of God. Must I, then, stop trying to think or speak at all? Let us not be troubled or alarmed by any large words such as this anthropomorphic. We must think as men. Not only this. Note this important point. That which is true to us as men is the only truth that really concerns us. What God may be to another kind of creature may be a matter of intellectual curiosity, but it is a matter of no practical import. It is what he is to us as men that we care for. So let us think about him the best we can and speak about him the best we can, as men, and not fear.

HE OR SHE?

One more point. People sometimes ask me why I speak of him as "he," why I do not say "she."

I do, as Theodore Parker used to say most beautifully "our father and our mother God." I use the word "he" simply because the English language is poor. We ought to have a personal pronoun that should express both thoughts in one, a common personal pronoun. If there were such a one, that is what I should use. Language is a clumsy instrument, as I find to my cost very frequently, when people misunderstand my use of it. But it is the best we have; and imperfect utterance is better than silence.

WHERE IS GOD?

Where is this God? This process which is troubling the modern world, as though it were taking God away from us, is only bringing him unspeakably nearer to us than he has ever been before. In the time when he was a member of the clan, he might be miles away from the worshipper who wanted him at any particular moment. When Rachel carried her father's gods off, she left him without any. There were certain miles of distance between them. When Jehovah was specially in the temple at Jerusalem, he must have been specially absent from other parts of the kingdom. When he was in the ether above the blue, he was not at the same time here. If he wanted to reach us, he had to send an angel to find us. But he has gone away in this modern, infinite universe only that he may come and abide with us forever. For to-day he is

closer than our breath, nearer than our hands and feet. He is in the distant stars, so distant that thought lags and falters in attempting to reach their height, in the air we breathe, in the light that streams through these windows, in the dust particle that floats in the air, in the unfolding leaf, in the rose, everywhere,— so near to me that I need not speak to have him hear, for he knows the faintest thought or wish unuttered. O friends, the poets that have felt this presence and have tried to utter it are wiser than we think. What is that which Byron had in mind when he said

> "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society, where none intrudes,
> By the deep sea" . . .?

Is only matter in the mountains, the stars, and in the deep sea? Is it only matter that responds to the highest, noblest, sweetest things in us? Nay, *it is a presence*. For, as Emerson says,—

> "They reckon ill who leave me out;
> When me they fly, I am the wings;
> I am the doubter and the doubt."

And more beautiful still in that well-known, hackneyed perhaps, but unsurpassed passage from Wordsworth: —

> "And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,—
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Friends, let us think of God as life, as spirit, as friend, as father, as the eternal presence that we cannot escape, who besets us behind and before, who lays his hand upon us, who is nearer to us than our heart's beat, nearer than the wish that rushes out to greet him, nearer than the hope that reaches up its hand for guidance and for help, the eternal, never far away from them that seek him.

CAN WE TRUST GOD?

Two Sundays ago this morning I spoke on the subject "Can We Think God?" My purpose at that time was to do what I could to remove or explain certain intellectual difficulties that stand in the way of rationally thinking of God. At that time I said there was another class of difficulties that troubled people,— certain moral objections that spring up in the mind as we try to think of God, not simply as being, but as goodness. I waived those objections one side, saying that very soon I should consider them by themselves. It is my purpose, then, this morning to touch on, and as adequately as I can, deal with these moral difficulties that stand in the way not so much of thinking God as of trusting him.

Hardly a week goes by that in personal conversation these old moral difficulties are not brought up. What about this thing? What about that? Is God really existent? Does he think? Does he care? Can he help things? If so, why does he not? Why do I suffer? Why do I lose a child or a friend? Why must I be in pain? Why must

my life be so unfilled, so unsatisfied,—why all these things, if God is, and if he is good?

Let us, then, without further preface, turn frankly and simply to these problems. I shall try not to blink or leave out of question any difficulty. I shall try not to assume anything. I shall try to keep my heart from running away with my head. I do not wish you to think that I am covering up anything or minimizing the difficulties; for we do not answer difficulties by shutting our eyes to them.

WOULD A GOOD GOD PERMIT PAIN?

The first great objection, the one I meet oftenest, perhaps, is that which springs out of the fact that there is so much suffering in the world. This is the objection that brave, true, noble men, like Colonel Ingersoll, for example, are constantly pushing to the front as the reason for their agnosticism. They say, "I cannot think of any God who rules the universe and at the same time allows things to go on after this fashion." I was talking only a little while ago with one of the best known women writers of the present age, whose name you would readily recognize. She declared to me that she was compelled to be an agnostic. "I cannot think," she said, "of any God; and I cannot believe in any God who allows so much of evil." There, then, is the difficulty. What shall we say to it?

I have several things to say, which, for the sake of clearness, I shall mark off one after another.

I.

DO WE EXAGGERATE THE EVIL?

In the first place, it seems to me that it is necessary for us justly to estimate the amount of pain, of sorrow, of evil, in the world. I believe, after a careful study of this matter for many years, that in this modern world we are immensely exaggerating the amount of the world's pain. I say this not because I wish to paralyze or discourage any effort for the relief of the world's burden or sorrow. I say this because it seems to me that it is just as possible for us to err on the one side as on the other; and an error on one side may be as mischievous as an error on the other. A man may be obtuse, hardened, lacking sensibility, not ready to do anything to lighten the burden of the world's sorrow, merely because he does not feel it, does not appreciate it. On the other hand, a person may become so supersensitive that he imagines the quantity of the world's sorrow to be immensely greater than it is; and this may have two results. It may magnify to his mind the difficulty of trust in God at all; and it may make the amount of the world's trouble seem so great to him as to discourage his heart and paralyze his arm. Sometimes, when I listen to a reformer eager to carry something that he believes would be greatly for the world's advantage, as I hear or see him argue in regard to the

importance of it, he makes the evil seem so great to me that I fall back and say, If at this time in the history of the world it is really so bad as that, then there is no use in trying to do anything. I believe, then, that we immensely exaggerate the amount of the world's suffering.

Let me illustrate one or two points that I have in mind.

THE ANIMAL WORLD AND "THE POOR."

1. We look down over the animal world, and from Tennyson, or from some sensitive, imaginative writer, we catch a hint of the idea that all the lower forms of life are being pursued by some other form of life, that their destiny is to be devoured. We hear the words "blood" and "rapine" until we imagine that all the world is one scene of blood and rapine, that every creature is haunted by fear, pursued by an enemy; and in this mood, perhaps, we are almost incapable of stopping on a morning like this, and listening to the whole world one voice of bird-song that does not mean suffering, but means ecstasy, unutterable joy. I only wish that you should see both sides; for, when you have seen both sides, I believe you will be convinced that the amount of pain and suffering on the part of the lower forms of life below man is infinitesimally small as compared with those sensations which mean gladness, which thrill with satisfaction from the very fact of being alive.

Then, when we take those tremendous forces that cause what we call the catastrophes of the world. The newspapers tell us of cyclones, of accidents of every kind reported from all over the world; but they forget to tell us, what is true, that the working of these forces which now and then result in a catastrophe are means of millions of times more good, more joy, more satisfaction, more happiness, than all the incidental evils which are the result of them. These same newspapers forget to tell us of day after day of sunshine and gentle rain, of the growth of grass, of the unfolding of flowers, and the ripening of acres and acres of corn and wheat and orchards of every kind. There are two sides, also, to this problem.

Then, when we come up to our own human level, how is it there? We are apt to look down upon those who are living on the level of savage life, and judge it from our own intellectual and æsthetic point of view, and think that it is all one repulsive horror. We imagine the Sioux Indian suffering what we might if we were suddenly transformed into Sioux Indians, with the consciousness of our Boston civilization still remaining in us; while, as a matter of fact, the Sioux, the most of the days of the year, is having a very comfortable time indeed, for a Sioux. You must remember that he has approached his condition not from above, but from beneath. He is climbing, not being pushed down.

Then we look over the comparative poverty of

even the civilized races until we exaggerate that. Mark you, there are these sore spots that no language can ever describe. I am not minimizing these facts, not lessening them at all. I simply want you to know that the quantity of pain and suffering and sorrow in that sense is very small as compared with the quantity of comparative comfort. And this you must remember in regard to this fact of suffering: that poverty is keenest on the part of those who have fallen from a higher level. If a man has been living on two thousand dollars a year and is suddenly compelled to live on five hundred dollars, he feels as though he could not possibly do it; but, if he has been living on two hundred and fifty and rises to five hundred dollars, it seems to him that he is rich. It is a matter of comparison, a relative matter. You drive by some of the houses of the poor, as you imagine them, and you project into their lives all your own sensitiveness, all the keenness of your present ability to suffer. If I chose to describe to you my own boyhood, you might waste on me a certain amount of pity. Yet, when I was a boy, I did not need pity at all. I asked no pity. It would seem to me an unspeakable calamity now suddenly to put my own children into such a boyhood as was mine; but my boyhood was healthy and happy in spite of privations which I did not then comprehend. Then you must remember, as you look over the lower races of the world and lower forms of life, that the keenly sensitive

nervous systems, which are the result of the highest civilization, do not exist down there. I have no time to go into this at length this morning. I only wish to suggest to you that there is not nearly the quantity of suffering in the world that we sometimes imagine when we pile it up as an indictment, and roll it to the foot of the throne of the Almighty, and say, God cannot be good since he permits all this,—that is all. Do not dare, any of you, to misinterpret what I have said into an excuse for neglecting to do what you can to make the burden of the world's sorrow less than it is.

WHAT IS PAIN?

2. The next point is to try to get at the idea as to what pain means. What is pain? Pain is always a warning, the indication of a broken law. If all the world were wise enough and strong enough perfectly to obey God's laws, pain would be annihilated. Pain, then, may well be spoken of as a token of God's love. It is a danger signal, saying, "No thoroughfare: do not attempt to pass this way." Suppose, for example, that I could cut off my finger, and it did not hurt, or burn off my hand, and not suffer any pain, there would not be enough left of me to be recognizable in six months. It is only because it hurts to injure ourselves that we guard ourselves on every hand.

PAIN AND PLEASURE.

3. There is another point I wish to speak of,—to raise the question whether you can conceive that it is possible, or might be possible, for a man to feel pleasure without the possibility of feeling pain. If you can comprehend such a possibility, I cannot. The nervous sensibility which makes us appreciate those things which are agreeable must of necessity make us also sensitive to those things not agreeable. A string of a piano or violin that can be touched to music can also be touched to discord; and you cannot have one without having the other. I do not see, then, how it comes within the range or scope of Omnipotent Power to create a race capable of joy without its being capable at the same time of pain.

COULD GOD PREVENT PAIN?

4. Let us see for a moment whether we can think out any way by which God could prevent the possibility of suffering in the world. What could he do to keep us from suffering? It is conceivable that he might have created us automatons: he might have made us machines, and wound us up, and set us going like clockwork, constructed so that we could not possibly go wrong. Or is there another way? Might he have made us so wise that we could never have made the mistake of breaking any law? But that is an absurdity. The only way

by which wisdom can be conferred upon any finite being is by means of experience. That is precisely the way in which God is conferring it upon us now. The only way in which I can think of its being done is that God should hang brooding over the earth all the time, watching us every instant, ready to interfere by a miracle to prevent us suffering when we break a law or to prevent us from breaking a law in the first place. I can conceive that the world might be turned into a scene of perpetual magic and miracle instead of being a world of law, in the midst of which reasonable beings are finding out how to live. But what is the price you would have to pay for it? It would be impossible for you to grow, to develop, to come to anything, in a world like that, because the motive and the means both would be taken away. I have tried to look over the whole field; and I do not see any way by which omnipotence and perfect love combined could frame a world in which intelligent, free, responsible beings could live without there being a possibility of their suffering.

MOST PAIN CURABLE.

5. It ought to take away from the indictment against the wisdom and goodness of God to remember that nearly all the suffering of the world is curable, and curable without praying to God,—curable by ourselves. The worst suffering of the world is that which you and I petulantly, angrily,

selfishly, ignorantly, or thoughtlessly, inflict on each other. If we could abolish this morning all the suffering of the world which men and women and children needlessly cause each other, pain would no longer remain a problem. Since this is true, is it quite fair for us to bring it as a problem, and charge it upon the Father of us all? So much for the question of pain and suffering as a difficulty in the way of trusting God. I know I have treated it only in outline and fragmentarily; but I think I have covered all essential points, and you can trace out the details for yourselves. I have no time to go into it more deeply now.

II.

MORAL EVIL.

We will turn, then, to the next great indictment brought against the goodness of God, the existence of "sin," as we call it, of moral evil. I have been told over and over again by objectors that they could not understand how I could claim that the manifestation of goodness in the universe proves the goodness of God, unless it be equally true that the manifestation of evil proves that God is evil. If love existing in human hearts is a good argument to prove that God is love, is not hate, which also exists in human hearts, a good argument to prove that God is hate? You remember that poem,

which I would quote if I had a good memory, of William Blake on the Tiger, and how he goes on to set forth the fearful elements of the tiger nature, and then bursts out in the wondering question, "Did He that made the lamb make thee?"

Let us see if we can find a pathway through this darkness of moral evil. Here, too, I wish to mark my points definitely.

WHAT IS EVIL?

1. What is evil? What do we mean by it? Is evil a substance? Is evil an entity? Is it a thing? Is it an essence? Is it anything that God has made or has permitted anybody else to make? If you will analyze it a little carefully, you will be compelled to agree with me that evil is not a thing, nor an essence, nor a substance. We have not to account for evil as something that manifests the nature, character, disposition, of anybody. For what is evil? Evil is nothing but this. It is the name by which we describe either the excessive use or the perverted use of faculties and powers which in themselves are completely good. There is no such thing as positive evil in the universe. The only way by which any man ever did evil, can now or ever can do evil, is by the perverted use or the excessive use of some one of his faculties or powers which in itself is perfectly good. Hate is not wrong. It only depends on what you hate and how. Killing may not be wrong. It depends on circum-

stances whether it is murder or heroism. There is no conceivable act which in itself and of necessity is evil. It depends upon conditions, upon circumstances, upon the motive, the purpose of it. Evil, then, is not a substance, not a thing to be accounted for. We are not to think of evil as an irruption from some infernal sphere into our otherwise beautiful world. We have not to account for it in that way at all.

"EVIL" A SIGN OF ADVANCE, NOT OF DEGRADATION.

2. Note another thing. Evil, this distinction between the good and the bad which we make, is not the sign of the degradation of the human race. On the other hand, it is a sign of the growth of the human race. We did not fall from a higher plane down to the level of evil. We climbed from a lower plane up to the level of evil. A recognition of good and bad is a stage in the ascent of the human race. There was a time when men and women existed on the earth, and were not *immoral*, but *unmoral*. They had not learned to recognize the distinction beween good and evil, because they had not risen high enough. The day when the human race first dimly saw the distinction between right and wrong — that is, the day on which moral evil as an experience was born — was one of the most hopeful days in the history of the race. It marked the fact that man was a being capable of growth, capable of progress. Find me a race some-

where in this universe that is stationary, that cannot grow, that has no higher ideals, no grander purposes, than those which lead it from day to day, and I will show you a race that does not have anything to say about sin, that does not talk about good or bad. The experience of evil, then, the possibility of it, marks the fact that this race of ours is a race capable of infinite expansion and growth, of climbing to higher things than those which are yet attained.

COULD GOD HAVE PREVENTED EVIL?

3. Let us raise the same question that we asked with reference to pain. Is there any way by which we can conceive that God might have prevented the existence of what we call evil, by which he could ever have kept us from doing wrong? Precisely as in the other case, so here we may imagine that God might have constructed us as automatons, machines, wound us up so that we could not run wrongly if we tried. He might have done that. Or, in the next place, some of us may foolishly dream that he might have made us so wise that we should not have made a mistake. But here again, as in the other case, I must remind you — and people need to be reminded over and over again a thousand times — that this is but pure foolishness and fallacious fancy. It is not within the power of Omnipotence to create a finite being perfectly wise all at once. You might as well make a hun-

dred-year-old oak in two years. It is a contradiction in the nature of things to think that knowledge of any kind, moral knowledge as well as any other, is anything but the result of experience,—the result of going wrong, and finding out that you have gone wrong and just choosing to go right thereafter. There is no possibility of help other than through experience. Or, taking the old supposition, you might imagine that God could watch over us, miraculously turning the world into a scene of magic; but, here again, this would prevent the possibility of growth, the possibility of our building ourselves up into the divine character. That we can only get through effort, through failure, through stumbling and falling and rising again. I cannot conceive of any other way by which God might have prevented it; and I do not believe, as you stop to think it over carefully, that you would choose to have the existence of moral evil prevented at the price of either of these three suppositions. If you would, I would not.

EVIL NOT PERMANENT.

4. In the next place, let us note that, since evil is not a thing in itself, not an entity, not a reality, only a misuse or an excessive use of powers and faculties that are right, we have the matter practically in our own hands; and, since we have reason to believe and trust that, in the infinite love and goodness of God, evil and its consequences are not

to be permanent, eternal, in the life experience of any human soul, we may easily believe that the time shall come when we shall even thank God from the bottom of our hearts for the experience of evil. For by that means we can build ourselves up into characters self-controlled, virtuous, good; and I do not know of any other way by which that end could be attained. Evil, then, is a successful indictment against the goodness of God only on the supposition that it and its result of pain are to be a permanent thing in the life of any single soul. We may imagine that every inhabitant of every planet in the blue deeps should naturally and necessarily pass through the experience of evil and out into characters of good without there being a shadow or stain on the perfect goodness or love of God. It is only when you conceive of it as being permanent in the life of any individual that it becomes an insuperable difficulty.

LIFE'S INCOMPLETENESS.

I have spent the most of my morning on these two difficulties because they are the principal ones and those that are generally brought as indictments against the wisdom and goodness of God. I wish to touch briefly on two others.

III.

People very foolishly, as it seems to me, bring as a charge against the government of the world the fact that our lives here are so unsatisfactory, so incomplete, that we can never sit down and say of the world, I am content to rest here. If people would look a little more deeply into some of these things, it seems to me they would find here one of the mightiest of all arguments for the precisely opposite conclusion. We talk about the dreams of our youth eluding us, the glory of the morning fading into the common light of day, about leaving our childhood fancies and finding ourselves in the dust and trouble, burden-weary, in the ardent heat of noon. We see great men in this direction or that dying at the age of forty, fifty, or sixty; and we foolishly say, All that is thrown away. Only within the last week I heard some one say, concerning a man who had been very wise and noble, What a pity he should not have left all that to some one here, when he went on! Pray, what would he do, as he goes on, if he had left that behind him? There is a man like Newton talking about gathering a few bright pebbles on the shore of an infinite sea, and life, so unsatisfactory, fading out into nothing. Why, what would you have? Take a young man in college. Suppose you saw him perfectly satisfied with the things that he found during his four years' college course,

—all his highest dreams and motives satisfied, filled with everything that he was capable of desiring or dreaming of. You would say that he had better stay in his college course forever; for, at any rate, it is perfectly plain that he would be unfitted to go out into a larger world. Suppose a man born and brought up in a hot-house and constituted its keeper should have brought to him in some mysterious way a plant that he should try to grow in the hot-house, but that he found it burst every largest pot that he could find to set it in, and that it was utterly incapable of finding room in the hot-house to expand itself. Even though he might believe that his hot-house was the universe and not know anything about any other world, nor how he came into possession of this seed, if he had any reason at all, he would conclude that that plant was not intended to be grown forever in a hot-house of that kind or size. So when I see people disappointed, unsatisfied here, ransacking the earth to find food for that which is highest in them, dreaming of other worlds, of something better, something grander, drinking every cup to the dregs and still being thirsty, exhausting resources so far as capable of apprehending them and still crying for more, I am compelled to believe that there is some significance in that fact, and that it must mean that man is larger than the capacities of his present dwelling-place. If there be any reason, then, in our supposing that man may fill up the measure of

this life without exhausting his capacity, then it seems to me, instead of its being an indictment against the goodness and wisdom of God, it only becomes the basis and ground of boundless hope on the part of the race.

IV.

IS DEATH AN EVIL?

One point more, which I must touch on with brevity. Death is spoken of as though it were the crowning catastrophe of all. You read no end of poems that wail themselves weary over the sorrows of life and its end in the shadow of the grave, speaking of the grave as of the great foe of human hopes, the devourer of human civilization, the destruction of all human dreams. Yet, even though death were the end, it would not be a positive calamity: it would only be a sleep.

But if you dare cherish the dream which I not only dare cherish, but cherish gladly without daring; if you dare cherish the dream that this is only the cradle of our human destiny, and that the grown-up life comes after death,— then, instead of death being an indictment against the goodness of God, it becomes his crowning act of mercy. Do not think that I am indifferent to the tragedies that connect themselves with death, to the fact of untimely death, the death of little children before

they need to die, the death of young husbands, leaving unprotected and alone wives and little children, the death of young mothers, leaving children who seem to need them more than ever. Do not think I overlook the bitterness of these temporary separations; for I forget not the evil which is connected with the fact of death, nor am I insensible to any of these things. I only wish to rise to the level of the higher view,— that the pains connected with death are many of them preventable. People need not suffer so much in dying as they do. Many of the premature deaths are preventable. Many a time we die as the result of the faults of our ancestors. We are entangled and enmeshed together, and share one another's good and one another's ill. I do not overlook any of these things; but, if there be a higher destiny for us, as I most certainly and gladly and triumphantly believe, then it would only be a calamity if we could not die. I can imagine myself condemned to life, and knocking, pleading at death's door, begging to be let in. So this need not, to my mind, be an indictment against the goodness of God. With this one outlook ahead of us, with life a school, we ourselves finite children learning to live in an infinite universe, God at the same time love and law, watching over us, waiting for us, bearing us up in his arms, it seems to me utterly rational for us not only to believe in God, but to trust in him utterly.

MAY WE PRAY TO GOD?

EVERY little while some one asks me why I pray, or how I can justify the fact that I pray. It seems inconsistent to the persons who ask such questions, — inconsistent with the new thought of the universe, with our belief in the universality and changelessness of natural law; inconsistent with our modern thought of God, his relation to humanity, and his method of governing the world. These questions are troubling a great many people. Some are so much troubled by them that they have ceased even in their public services to use the form of prayer. I need instance only such cases as Mr. Adler in New York and my friend Mr. Salter in Chicago. But note, please, that, in my judgment, the attitude of these men does not indicate that they are less religious. It is not a question of our being religious or irreligious. It is a question of clear thinking, a question of consistency, a question as to the method of being religious in the midst of the difficulties that surround us in the modern world. I offer you nothing infallible on the subject. I claim no superior knowledge. I propose merely this: to tell you as frankly as I

may how it looks to me; to answer the question as to why I pray.

REAL DIFFICULTIES.

These difficulties are very real, but they are also perfectly natural. I shall try not to overlook any of them. I shall try not to hide myself away from any enigma. If we find one that we cannot answer, let us say so frankly, recognizing precisely where we are.

In this spirit, then, let us consider a little carefully this question of prayer. I believe it to be of great importance. It is central, in a way, to the religious life. All the world has always been praying. Prayer seems to be the outflowering, the natural outflowering, of the religious nature of man. If we must surrender it, and the hopes that underlie it and are associated with it, then we will; and we will not be deterred from surrendering it even by the tremendous fact that it seems to be instinctive on the part of humanity. A great many things that the world has believed in the past, up to the present time, we can believe no longer. So we will not even get behind this presupposition in favor of prayer.

NO DIFFICULTIES IN THE EARLY WORLD.

At the outset, I wish to call your attention to the fact that in all the past prayer has seemed perfectly natural, and has been perfectly reasonable and in

accord with the theories that have been held in regard to the gods and in regard to the government of the world. As an illustration, take the case of a tribe that has deified one of its dead chiefs and that now worships him as the god of the tribe. Who is he? He is one of their own people who has now become invisible and is clothed with powers that he did not possess when he was among them. He holds perhaps their destiny in his hands; but he is of the same nature as they, governed by substantially the same motives, capable of being appealed to, of being flattered, perhaps of being bribed. He is not very far away. He is outside of the system of things, and is capable of exercising a certain magical control over the course of events. He can lead the people in the fight against another tribe; he can accompany them on a journey and guard them against danger; he can assist them in hunting expeditions and crown their efforts with success. You see that under this conception of God and his relation to his people prayer is perfectly natural. If they can only interest him, if he is not off somewhere, if he is not asleep, as Elijah tauntingly suggested to the prophets of Baal, if they can only gain his attention, if they can purchase his interest by doing something that he wants done, then they can get their prayer answered; and it is as natural a thing as it would be to endeavor to gain the good will or assistance of their living chief.

PRAYER IN GREECE AND ROME.

Substantially the same views have prevailed in all the ancient world. Come down to classic times, to the old worship of Rome and of Greece. If you are familiar with Homer or Virgil or the old poets and their method of setting forth the popular religious beliefs of the time, you know that Juno, for example, could get angry with her worshippers if they did not bring the proper sacrifices. She would withhold her help or favor if she were not flattered or praised. She could be jealous of another deity whose altar smoked with more frequent offerings. If you could only gain influence sufficient with her, you could get on, and could get almost anything accomplished within the limits of her power. The people dealt with their gods in the classic ages almost precisely as people would deal with any powerful individual from whom they desired to win a favor.

PRAYER IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

How was it on the part of the Hebrews in Old Testament times? Was it very different then? Jehovah, the Hebrew God, lived outside of the system of nature. He governed it magically, by miracle, interfering with it as he pleased. He needed, as some persons who pray still seem to think God needs, information at times. If you remember the story of Babel, you will recall the

fact that a rumor reached heaven that certain people were attempting to build a tower; and God is represented as coming down to see if the report is true, and to decide what to do about it if he found that it was so. God could be at a distance from the people. He could be persuaded. The prophets and the priests were continually telling the people in Old Testament times that the reason they were given into the power of their enemies, why plagues came, why there was drought, or famine, or disaster, was because certain things that God wanted done had been neglected. Or, if they desired some new favor, they were told that they could win it, provided they brought a proper sacrifice and offered a proper oblation or performed some service that he required at their hand. You see, then, that in Old Testament times the same idea held in regard to God.

PRAYER IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

In the New Testament was it different? As the world has gone on, the idea of prayer has become more and more exalted in the imagination and the thought of the people; but substantially the same conception has been held about God. In other words, until the modern world, until within the time of living men, God has almost universally been regarded as a power outside of and away from nature, ruling it from without in this magical way.

AN EARTHLY PARALLEL.

Take an illustration precisely parallel. Let us consider the Emperor of Germany and the relation in which he stands to his people. He does not know everything that is taking place over the empire; but he has his messengers who bring him reports of what is taking place. If he wishes a commission executed, he cannot execute it by a direct act of his will; but he sends a messenger — angel means only messenger — to carry out his purpose. If any one in his kingdom wishes a wrong redressed or a favor granted, some special thing that he cannot accomplish except by the will of the emperor himself, he tries to get into the presence of the emperor to present his petition. If he finds it difficult to interest the emperor, because he is personally of too low estate or if he has no power at court, he will take measures to win over some high official, perhaps the prime minister himself, who may get the emperor interested in having this thing done. He is almost sure of its accomplishment if the prime minister will mediate for him with the emperor. For his sake the emperor may do for a subject what he would not do for the subject's sake alone. In giving this picture, am I not giving you almost a perfect illustration of the way in which prayer has been generally regarded throughout Christendom, the attitude in which the individual is supposed to stand towards God? Men

have looked upon God as a being outside of things, who could make it rain if he chose, who could send a pestilence or a flash of lightning as a judgment if he chose, outside of the natural course of nature. He could grant any special favor that he would, he could heal my child or my friend by a special miraculous act if he would. Has it not been taught us from the beginning that, though we might not be able to go directly to the presence chamber of the Father, we might win his good will "for the sake of Christ," if we could get the mediator interested? Jesus is referred to as sitting at the right hand of the Father, carrying on this work of eternal mediation, presenting, as I have heard it said a thousand times, the prayers of the saints to the Father, and pleading with the Father that, for the sake of his sufferings on earth, he would take care of the members of his church that he had selected out of the multitude of the world's inhabitants.

Now, so long as we could think of God as in this attitude towards the world, so long as we could think of him as a king ruling in this way in his kingdom, surrounded by a court with favorites, with a prime minister, his own son, ever at his side ready to take all petitions and present them to him and win him to granting them,— so long, I say, as we could think of God in this way, prayer of the old kind was perfectly natural, and presented no intellectual difficulties whatsoever.

THE GREAT CHANGE.

The one most important thing that has happened in the history of human thought is this changed conception of ours in regard to the relation of God to his world. We have learned — and it is established beyond any question — that the universe is one universal network of changeless law. We have learned that God, instead of being outside of things, interfering with this thing and the other, is in and through the universe, so that these forces, working in accordance with changeless law, are the expression of the thought, the purpose, and the life of God. The forces of the universe, acting according to law, are the expression of the present life and work of Deity. Do you not see what a tremendous change of thought this is, and how it changes the relation in which we stand to God, and, therefore, must change our reasonable thought about prayer?

APPARENT ANSWERS.

I wish to admit right here, lest some hearer or reader should think I had overlooked something that is important, that there are apparent answers to prayer, and a great many of them. Take the case such as I have known in my own experience, of a person suffering with some chronic disease, who suddenly becomes relieved of that difficulty immediately after, if not as a result of, the prayer of herself or of some one else. There are cases

like this. I am inclined to think, however, that where they are genuine and permanent they are the result, not of any miraculous interference on the part of God, but of the impulse that has been given to the vital forces of the system by the belief, or by the activity, of the mind itself. There are other cases, as of a man who starts out on some charitable work, and trusts entirely to prayer for the supply of all his wants. I do not speak in any light way of this; but I have noticed always that the persons who depend entirely on prayer are not anxious to keep this fact secret. It becomes known; and the natural interest of those who love charitable work is enlisted, and it seems to me perfectly natural that supplies of one kind or another should come pouring in. And, if the supply should happen to follow immediately after the prayer, it would be nothing strange, and might easily be accounted as a coincidence. There are other cases still,— cases of persons apparently warned of a danger or saved from some impending ill by what looks like the interference of some one from the invisible world. It looks like an answer to prayer. There is no end to such cases. Here it will be sufficient for me for my present purpose to say that, if there are invisible finite beings, either our friends who have once lived here on earth or others who are interested in us who can still know what our needs are, and who have power to come to our assistance,— these would be the more

natural ones to look to as those who have accomplished this special interference for us; and if there have been such interferences as these, or by such agents as these, that would not be at all supernatural or in any way unnatural. They would be precisely as natural as would be my coming to your help if I knew that you were in need. This explanation would account for them without the immense difficulty which lies in the way of regarding them as a direct answer to a prayer addressed to the Omniscient One. For, if God, in order to answer prayer, selects me to save me from disease and from accident; or if he cures my friend because I beg him to, and then lets some poor widow starve with all her children, though she beg him day and night for help; or lets some young woman in distress get into such difficulty that she is ready to barter her soul for bread, does it not seem partial? Is it quite what we should expect from the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-loving One, who makes no distinction of persons? I merely intimate this in a word. I have no time to go into detail. I have hinted what would be to me a sufficient way out of the difficulty.

THE GREAT DIFFICULTY.

Taking up the main thread of my theme again, I wish to suggest that, if God in answer to prayer should interfere with the order of nature as we now understand it, he would be doing two or three

utterly unbelievable things. Remember, this order of nature that we speak of is not something apart from God: it is God in eternal activity. To ask him, then, to interfere and change these laws would be, in the first place, to ask him to interfere with one hand with what he is all the time doing, and doing presumably wisely, with the other.

If God is perfect wisdom, we should expect that his laws would be changeless, we should expect eternal order.

ARE SPECIAL MIRACLES WROUGHT?

In the next place, we are asking him to do what? We are asking him to work a miracle for our special behoof. Do you know what it means to work a miracle? If God, by a special act of will, should add one single tiniest drop to the moisture that hangs suspended in our atmosphere over the city of Boston to-day, he would work as stupendous a miracle as though he should uproot Mount Washington and hurl it into Boston Harbor. When you are talking of the Omnipotent, you must remember that it would be as much of a miracle to do the one as the other, and one would be just as easy as the other. The condition of the atmosphere to-day is the result of the changeless interworking of the laws of cause and effect, running back into the eternities.

MIRACLE AND CIVILIZATION.

Then, to take another phase of this miracle-working. It would make civilization impossible. If the qualities of iron or wood or water or gases were liable suddenly to change as the result of prayers, do you not see that civilization would be an absurdity? There would be no possibility of studying, of counting on the regularity which is the basis of all our knowledge. We should be in a world that was insane, because we could not tell what might happen at any moment. It would take away all moral motive. Why should I take the trouble to learn and obey the laws of health, why should I care for hygiene, for sanitation, if every time I got into a difficulty all I had to do would be to pray to God and he would make me well? There are certain people among those who call themselves Christian Scientists who advocate precisely this absurd position,—I do not know whether they quite believe it. They ridicule hygiene and physiology, and say disease and everything of the sort would not exist if we did not think it. So there need not be any sanitation, any street-cleaning, any care for a pure water supply, anything of that kind. All we have to do, they say, is to think that it is all right, and it is.

SELFISH PRAYER.

Then there is another difficulty about this kind of prayer, that it is utterly selfish. I have a piece

of land on high ground, sandy soil, naturally dry. My neighbor is on low land, clayey, and naturally wet. I pray for rain. If God grant my prayer, he must either give me a shower that limits itself to my particular farm or damage my neighbor for the sake of favoring me. I am sailing a ship at sea. I pray for a north wind; and I must pray squarely in the face of the interest of the man who wishes a south wind. I cannot interfere with the marvellous network of laws and forces that make up the universe without damaging some other interest for the sake of helping my own. Is it not, then, really the better way for us to learn the nature of things, and wisely adapt ourselves to this nature rather than attempt constantly to interfere with its work?

That kind of prayer, then, which is begging God to do for us things that we can do for ourselves, or do for us what we desire at the expense of interfering with the natural laws of the universe,—that kind of prayer seems to me not only irrational, but also irreligious. It does not accord with the highest conception of God, the noblest and truest trust in him.

MUST WE STOP PRAYING?

And now what is the issue? Are we to stop praying? We cannot. Is prayer to be left behind in the history of the world? It cannot be. There is not a person on the round world that can help praying if he tries. There is not a person living

who does not pray every day of his life. What is prayer? Prayer is not getting on your knees. Prayer is not speaking out loud. Prayer is not begging for things in that sense. Every time you wish for anything you do not possess, you pray. Every time you aspire for anything higher and nobler than you have attained, you pray. Every time you reach out your hand to grasp something you do not possess, you pray. Every time you lay out a plan or scheme for the accomplishment of some desired end, you are engaged in prayer. And since God is the source of all things, ultimately, in the last analysis, whether you mean it or not, you are praying to God.

THE PERMANENT ELEMENT IN PRAYER.

I wish now to deal with this positive side of prayer as carefully as I have dealt with the negative, and see where we are.

The old-time prayer, the prayer that seems to me now utterly unjustifiable, taken in its totality, was not all unreasonable. Take almost any prayer that you ever listened to, uttered by the most ignorant, illogical person you ever knew, and take it to pieces, and see what it is composed of. It was only partly asking for rain, or for a favorable wind, or for an interference with natural law. A large part of it was the utterance of the thankfulness of the heart. A large part of it was aspiration, a desire for righteousness, for truth, for holiness.

Another large part of it was the reaching out of the finite spirit to come in contact, in communion, with the Infinite Spirit. And nothing has happened to antiquate or make unreasonable any of these. The only part of prayer that is antiquated, that has become irrational, is that part which deals with God as though he were an absent potentate, and tries to make him interfere with his own methods of work. I have heard people pray to God as though he needed rousing, as though he needed to have his attention directed to something that he might have overlooked. I have heard him prayed to as though he needed a great deal of information. I have heard him prayed to as though he might be tired out and led to answer prayer for much speaking. I have heard him prayed to as though he were not quite ready to answer prayers, but might be influenced in some way to change his purpose. All these are not only irrational, but impious. But the prayer that does not seek any of these things may still be purely rational, purely in accord with all we know of the universe and the method of its government.

WHAT DO WE REALLY WISH IN PRAYER?

I wish to ask your attention to two or three things that are left, and see if there are not a number of things that we desire to attain by prayer. There is no person here to-day who wishes to interfere with the order of nature. I do not believe you

would undertake to manage the weather, even if you might. You do not desire to change the purposes and plans and methods of Deity. What do you wish? We may reason as much as we please, there is still this instinctive yearning of the child-heart for the mother-heart, the father-heart, of the universe. Reason as much as you please, and, the more you reason, the more it will be so. We are children of the Infinite; and we long for the sense of being children, not orphans, not lost, not forgotten, in the wide wastes of space. What, then, do we really desire? and what is it that it is reasonable to suppose we can get by prayer?

WE WISH STRENGTH.

In the first place, you cannot help desiring, wishing, reaching out, endeavoring to attain; and these are prayer. Now, let us see the reasonable basis on which it rests. The first thing we desire is strength, — strength to bear, to carry the burdens laid upon us, to be patient, to have courage to walk on, even though it is dark. Strength, patience, courage, — these things we need; and is it unreasonable to suppose that if God is, as I believe with my whole soul, and if he is my Father, — is it unreasonable to suppose that by getting into my heart a sense of his presence, of his care, it may make me strong?

Take a purely human analogy. I have sat by the side of a bed on which a patient was going through

some surgical operation. I did not help in the operation. I could not spare the patient one single pain; and yet the patient has grasped my hand for the touch of human sympathy and care, and has been lifted and made strong, and has gone through the operation, as could not possibly have been done but for the touch of this human sympathy and help. No law was changed. The universe was not interfered with one particle. Pain was not lessened in one sense; but the soul was made strong to bear. And are there not times, a thousand, when we need this more than we need any possible interference with the course of things? I believe, through prayer, this outreaching of the heart, of the child-heart to the father-heart, this uplift of the hand, even in the dark, that clasps the father-hand,— this is of infinite worth.

WE WISH COMMUNION.

Take another phase of prayer that is purely reasonable,— the desire for communion. This, again, is a natural thing. The Shakspere-lover sits down over his well-thumbed volume, and reads not only, but meditates. He thinks, he dreams, he resurrects the past and the life of his favorite. He drinks in the air that Shakspere breathed. He walks with his characters, he lives in his time, he communes with him. Is that not a real thing? You all know that a bowlder or a mountain is not more real than that; and neither bowlder nor moun-

tain is of half as much consequence as that. God, the Father, Infinite Spirit; I, the child. I dream, I think, I get into his spirit, I breathe his air, I live for a little this higher life. Is it unreal? That which makes us human, which gives us a power to grow, to slough off and leave behind us our lower selves and become nobler and better,— is this divine thing in us not more real than the food with which you feed your body, a million times more real?

WE WISH TO BECOME GODLIKE.

Take one more phase of it. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Jesus told us that the one thing most important of all that we need to pray for was the spirit of God, to come into relation with the divine, so as to be transformed and made over into the likeness of the divine; that is, to be built up into righteous character. We pray for this. Is the prayer of no avail? Can we build ourselves up into this character just as well without the prayer? Possibly without verbal prayer, without the uttered prayer, but not without the essential prayer, which is the hunger and the thirst; for you do not seek those things about which you are careless.

TRUE PRAYER NOT MERE "SPIRITUAL GYMNASTICS."

I believe that this praying is something more than it has been called by the objector,—a sort of religious gymnastics. It is more than that which produces a subjective effect on the man who prays.

Let me see if I can illustrate this a little. You wish a flower, a blossom. You do not expect to change the laws of sunshine or the chemical power of the sun's rays. But you know perfectly well that the regular, unchanging action of the sunshine will produce a different result in this particular plant or flower according as you change the relation of the plant to the sunshine. Suppose I wish the water of a particular stream to turn my mill-wheels. I do not expect to interfere with the regular flow of the water or with any of the natural laws concerned; but, if I build my mill at the right place and attach my machinery, the regular flow of the water will produce results that otherwise would not be produced. So I believe that this matter of prayer — essential prayer — changes the attitude of the soul, puts us into different and favorable relations to God, and so produces results by the eternal, unchanging action of the laws and life of God that would not be produced in any other way. So prayer is as mighty as the work of him who takes a plant out of the shade and sets it in the sun, as mighty as the work of the millwright who constructs the machinery and adapts it to the changeless action of the eternal forces.

REAL PRAYER REMAINS.

Prayer, then, still remains as a means by which we may wait on the Lord and so renew our strength; as a means by which we may enter into communion with the Infinite Spirit and so be comforted and helped; as a way by which we may gain this power to lift and reconstruct, to strengthen, to build righteous character. All the principal things, then, for which we desire to pray, still remain untouched by modern thought, in perfect consistency with all that we know about the universe.

AS TO CERTAIN PHRASES.

I wish now to deal with one or two practical matters because they are perpetually brought into connection with this general subject of prayer. There is a custom, even on the part of liberal ministers, of praying "for Christ's sake," or "for Jesus' sake," or "in the name of Christ," or "in the name of Jesus," or "as disciples of Jesus," or "as disciples of Christ,"— some of these forms. I cannot think that these are wise or right. They seem to me to impeach the eternal love and goodness of God. They are remnants of that old Oriental conception of God as on a throne with a favorite at his elbow, for whose sake, or in whose name, he will do what otherwise he would not do. I cannot think that these forms are an honor either to Jesus or to God. The Infinite Love, the All-father,

helps us and teaches and leads us for his own sake, because he is what he is and we are what we are, because we need and he can grant. Any other motive is less worthy than that.

AS TO PUBLIC PRAYER.

Then there is one matter more, the question of public prayer. Jesus, if he be correctly reported and if we are to take his word as authority in the matter, says distinctly and definitely, When thou prayest, enter into thy inner chamber: do not do as the hypocrites do who pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, making a parade of their piety. Yet I pray in public. Let me explain this apparent inconsistency. You know it is customary in Mohammedan countries to have to pray a certain number of times a day: it is enjoined as a duty. When the hour strikes, wherever they are, they must drop on their knees and turn their faces to Mecca in a service of prayer. So there have been stated formal prayers in almost all religions; and under such conditions it is very easy for a person who wishes to be reputed pious to make an unnecessary parade in public of his piety; and it is this, and this alone, that Jesus is speaking against. When I pray here on a Sunday morning, I do not try to utter any personal wish. I try, simply, quietly, and in the private of this our room, to voice the common need, the common aspiration, the common wants, of the common heart. This

does not seem to me to come within the scope of the condemnation of Jesus.

THE ISSUE.

The issue, then, is that prayer, with all that is finest, highest, sweetest, still abides. I think we may utter without fear the words from Tennyson in "The Higher Pantheism": —

"Speak to him thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

We walk this life-path in his presence, surrounded by him as we are by the light and the air. And our prayer is that of the little child that recognizes the father's presence and reaches out a hand to touch him, to be sure he is there, to certify to the heart that he still cares, that he is still close to us, and that we do not err in putting perfect trust in him.

MAY WE WORSHIP GOD?

DIFFICULTY SPRINGING FROM OUR HIGHER THOUGHT OF GOD.

To THOSE who allow their minds to appreciate difficulties and to feel dissatisfied until they have done at least what they can to solve them, so that their religious nature shall be brought into accord with the dictates of reason,— to such persons as these there are one or two great difficulties surrounding this matter of worship. We have come, in the modern world, to have such an exalted thought not only concerning the greatness, but the dignity of the character of God, that we cannot any longer think of him as one who wants to be flattered, as one who wants to be, in the ordinary meaning of that word, even praised. It seems derogatory to our thought of God that he should want us to tell him how big he is, how wonderful, how mighty, how pure, how true. By as much as he is these, by so much we are coming to feel that he does not want that sort of tribute paid to him.

DIFFICULTY SPRINGING FROM OUR HIGHER THOUGHT OF MAN.

And, on the other hand, there is a difficulty from our own point of view. We have grown to such a sense of personal independence, personal dignity, personal self-respect, that, even in the presence of earthly rulers who might desire such things, we say we will not concede them. So I think that not only on the part of irreligious men, but on the part of the noblest men and women, there is growing the feeling that we could not offer this sort of worship, even though we believed God desired it. It is inconsistent, in other words, with our noblest thought about ourselves. So there is a serious question on the part of many as to what worship must mean, as to the degree in which our thought about it must be modified, as to how much of the old ideas and the old forms are left for our appropriation and use.

PRIMITIVE IDEAS.

As in the case of prayer, in order that we may have a clear comprehension of the theme, it seems to me that I must ask you to go back and trace some of the primitive ideas, to note some of the phases of the development of this aspect of religious thought and life.

THE OLD WORSHIP NATURAL IN THE OLD TIMES.

What was worship at the first? What kind of thoughts did men cherish concerning their gods? What did they suppose their gods desired at their hands? and in their worship what were they trying to do?

I would not speak dogmatically on the subject; but some of the best scholars and thinkers are accustomed to trace the first form of worship to the burial-mound of the dead. You know that it was the habit of primitive peoples, as it is the habit of certain primitive peoples yet who have not outgrown that phase of thought and life, to think that the spirits of the dead were still hungry and thirsty; and, after the body had been laid away and the burial-mound heaped over the grave, this mound became practically an altar, and food — the primeval offering — was laid upon it, the spiritual essence of which was supposed to satisfy the hunger of the departed one. Upon this same mound libations were poured out, drink-offerings to the dead, to furnish a supply for the thirst that was supposed to outlive the body.

Whether this was the origin of these forms of worship or not I do not care to enter into the discussion to-day. For the purpose I have in mind it makes no difference what opinion you may hold concerning this particular point. But we do know that certain tribes were accustomed to worship

their ancestors,— the spirit of the dead chief or some hero lifted above the mortal and apotheosized, turned into a deity. And we know that they were accustomed to worship them under these particular forms,— that they fed the god, that they gave him drink. And I suppose there is no sort of question that the primeval sacrifices, the first forms of sacrifice that the world ever knew, were connected with this idea of a feast shared with the deity. The deity was supposed to eat and drink with his worshippers so they entered into this common bond of a common interest and a common life.

THE OLD GODS HUNGRY AND THIRSTY.

That this matter of feeding the gods was not merely a phase of original barbarism we can see by the traces and remnants of it which continued for so many years, even up into those times that we are accustomed to celebrate as grandly and gloriously civilized. Take it throughout the entire history of Greece and Rome. The particular forms of worship, the particular types of worship of their gods, were only traces of this primeval form of giving them food to eat and libations to drink. And you are not to think of it as connected merely with those that we call pagan, heathen, barbaric peoples. It runs all through the Old Testament from the beginning. What did Jacob do on his journey? After he had had his wondrous dream and believed

that the Divine Being had manifested himself to him in that dream, the next morning he raises a stone — the primeval altar — and pours out upon it his libation. And if you read the prophets carefully, if you read the law of the Hebrews, you will find that one of the methods of serving Jehovah, of worshipping him, was this pouring out a drink-offering as well as offering a sacrifice of food for the god to eat. And you remember that naïve, simple story, how Noah after the flood offered his burnt-offering, and how God up in heaven is represented as smelling the sweet savor of the burning food and being pleased, delighted, with the smell, and promising that he would not send a similar flood upon the earth any more. So wherever you find a burnt-offering as a form of worship, wherever you find libations poured out to the gods, there you find a remnant of the old idea that the gods needed to be fed, that they needed to have drink. It is a curious illustration, of no significance except to show how ideas in attenuated and sublimated forms persist age after age, century after century, that we still, in connection with the launching of a ship and the giving it its name, are expected to break a bottle of wine on the prow,— which is only the last worn out, etherealized, poetic remnant of giving the god something to drink.

THE OLD GODS VERY HUMAN IN ALL THINGS.

Along with this idea of giving the god food and drink went other ideas quite as human and quite

as natural, remnants and traces of which we also may discover in the history of all religions. The deified chieftain his people knew while he lived here loved to be honored, loved to have his prowess recognized, his greatness celebrated; for you know it is one of the commonest things in the world for a barbaric chieftain to isolate himself from his people, set himself apart and on high, and compel all those who wish to come into his presence to do so in some attitude betokening utter humility. They must prostrate themselves not merely on their knees, but on their faces, perhaps crawl into his presence; and the more they can humiliate themselves, the more they can exalt their chief in the terms in which they address him, the more he is supposed to be pleased. So you find that one of the commonest things in connection with primitive forms of worship were certain rude chants which are probably the original of the hymns that we still sing in our modern churches. These chants set forth the physical might, the courage, the achievements, the valor, the various qualities, of the chieftain now lifted to the position of deity.

Then they gave to this deity such human qualities as pride, as generosity, as pity, as anger. In other words, he was moved by all passions that swayed his followers and worshippers; and so, if they wished to gain some favor at his hands, they would chant a hymn in his honor. They would not only pray to him and beg him to grant the peti-

tion, but they would bring an offering, they would do something by which he might be glorified, lifted up in the admiration of his people, and he was supposed to be pleased. It was supposed that by this sort of worship he could be prevailed upon to do the things that his worshipper desired. And if he were angry, if in any way, intentional or unintentional, his people had offended him, he might in this way be placated and appeased.

If you will read the Æneid of Virgil or the Iliad or Odyssey of Homer, or the works of any of the old classical poets, you will find the hero now and then in the position of having offended one of the gods. What does he do? He goes in all humiliation and brings gifts, offerings, piles up the altars, and hopes thus to win forgiveness and consideration. You will find Æneas approaching the altar of one of the gods with a vow, saying, If you will only do such and such things for me, if you will only make my voyage successful, guard me against the dangers of the sea, if you will only help me obtain this victory over my enemies, I will what? I will bring you so many animals to your altar. I will make such and such sacrifices. I will do such and such things if only you — the particular deity he is addressing — will grant these things.

SURVIVALS OF THE OLD IDEAS STILL REMAIN.

You see from these illustrations what ideas and thoughts have underlain the worship of the antique world.

But these things are by no means entirely gone by. If you will visit some of the churches in Rome, as I have done, you will see the altar of one of the Marys, sometimes the life-sized statue of the saint herself, literally buried, covered with gifts. Almost every place on the statue that is capable of having something attached to it is covered with gifts of one sort or another,— golden chains, decorations of every kind; these either in the payment of a vow or in recognition of something that has been done, or supposed to have been done, as a favor. You find, then, similar ideas not only among barbaric peoples: you find them in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. For, although Paul declares that gifts and sacrifices and offerings have passed away with the old Mosaic ritual, once for all repealed, it is not because offerings, sacrifices, have ceased to possess any virtue, but because of his belief in one infinite sacrifice, that the son of God himself has been offered once for all. So it is not the doing away of sacrifice, but only the substitution of one particular act of sacrifice for all that had preceded it.

If you trace the history of the Christian Church in Catholic or in Protestant lands, you will find that similar thoughts, feelings, and methods of reasoning have manifested themselves in almost all these popular forms of worship. God has always been supposed to be a being who wanted to be praised, a jealous being, who wanted nobody else

praised, a being who could not bear any pride or self-esteem, or hardly what we to-day would call self-respect, on the part of his worshippers. You will find people grovelling, crawling, into the presence of deity. You will find them speaking of themselves as "worms of the dust," depreciating, decrying themselves in the strongest language which they were capable of using. On the other hand, you will find them exhausting the powers of language to exalt and praise and glorify and magnify the deity; doing this, not merely as a setting forth of that which they believed to be true, but as an act of worship, as though God loved to be thus praised, as though he loved to see his creatures thus in the dust. Thus in one form or another the idea of offering still remains. A day or certain methods of worship are appropriated to him as a gift, and he is very jealous of the possession of these things. They must not be interfered with or touched in any way whatsoever. In other words, these same human passions are still supposed to characterize the deity, and thus he may be appealed to or played on, as in ancient times.

THE GREAT CHANGE CAUSED BY GROWTH.

But a change is passing over the thought of man. We cannot any longer think of God under this pattern of an Oriental monarch. You will have noticed, if you have studied the thoughts of the world under any sky, in any religion, that the peo-

ple have been accustomed to construct their heavenly court after the highest and grandest image they were familiar with of an earthly one. You will find in all religions the type of human government with which the people have been familiar reflected in the heavens. This is perfectly natural. For the very best thing we can do concerning God and spiritual things is to think of them under the image of the noblest things we are familiar with on earth; only we are beginning to remember that these fall unspeakably short of the divine reality.

GOD NO LONGER WANTS FLATTERY.

We are ceasing, then, I say, to be able to be satisfied with this idea of God as an Oriental monarch, as wanting to be eulogized, as needing to be fed, as needing to drink, as needing service of this sort at our hands, even the highest and most refined.

And there has been going on in the modern world also a development of the sense of personal dignity, personal self-respect. In other words, our republicanism, our notions of freedom and quality, are beginning to be reflected in our religious thinking, feeling, and development, which is perfectly natural and inevitable. But, as the result of it, we are coming to think that God does not want this kind of service at our hands, coming to think that we could not, consistently with our self-respect, do such service, even if he did want it. We are learning that greatness, true greatness, is self-forgetful service, not exaltation and flattery.

WHAT, THEN, OF WORSHIP?

Where are we, then, in this matter of worship? How many of the old ideas are antiquated and gone by? How much of them can we still retain? Is the world to lose out of its life this element of worship? Are we to cease to stand in this sort of relation to him who is Spirit, the Eternal?

I think that a large part of that which has existed in the past is fading out of our lives, but that instead of ceasing to be worshippers we are coming to worship still more and more. Worship is to play a grander, deeper, higher, broader part in our lives than it has ever played before.

UNWORTHY IDEAS PASS AWAY.

Let me see if I can make myself clear. In the sermon on Prayer, I told you, after I had enumerated those things about prayer which we no longer believe in, that these were not all, that there was another element in prayer which was ever enduring, more important than any of the things that reason compelled us to surrender. So I say in regard to this matter of worship: although these things that we have been speaking of are to pass away as the necessary result of a grander thought about God and a nobler thought about ourselves, yet these things have not been all in the worship of the past. There has been an element there which we have not touched on as yet, but which contains in it the

germ of that which is noblest and finest in human life, and which the future instead of taking away is only to deepen. No matter how poor, no matter how mean, may have been the relation of the worshipper towards God in the past, there has always been underlying these acts of worship a feeling of awe, as in the presence of a superior power, no matter whether that power was regarded as superior in strength merely or in wisdom or in goodness. And wherever a conscious, reasonable being stands in the presence of an overshadowing superior might there must come a feeling of awe.

THE PERMANENT ELEMENT IN WORSHIP.

And now note. If this being, superior in power, be a being of evil, of hate, of malignity, then the awe of course degenerates, and becomes an ignoble fear,— not a power to lift up, but a power to degrade. But if the being that we recognize with awe is superior to us, if he is wise and good, wiser and better than we, then this feeling of awe becomes an ennobling force in us. It lifts us up. This sense of awe, then, has been at the heart of all the worship of the past.

And now, transformed a little, the element of fear taken out of it,— because perfect love casts out fear, and there can be no degrading fear in the presence of a being we trust,— the fear, then, being cast out of the awe, it becomes what? Note this now; for, if we analyze worship, we find this to be

the essence, the heart, the eternal part of it all. It is admiration, this awe for a superior power, when the element of degrading fear is taken out of it, that is true worship,— that worship which leads us to admire that which we love and seek to be like it. We come, then, to that which is permanent and must abide as the centre, the essence, the heart, of real worship.

THE PERMANENT IS ADMIRATION.

And now I wish to show you, under two or three different heads, the relation which this quality bears to that which is noblest and finest in human character and life. The larger part of that which has passed for worship in the past we can no longer cherish, because it seems unworthy of God and unworthy of ourselves. We cannot be worshippers in that sense. But is that which is the essential thing — the deepest thing in worship — likely to be outgrown? Let us see.

WORSHIP THE MEASURE OF NOBILITY.

1. Note, in the first place,— and I make this my fundamental statement,— the nobility of a man or a woman is measured by his or her capacity for worship in this sense of admiration. If you study the lower forms of life, whatever fears and hopes, whatever passions, you may note that they possess, I think it is true that you find nothing on the part of the lower animals which is akin to admiration, and

very little that is akin to curiosity. Those who have travelled among barbaric peoples and studied their characteristics tell us that one of the most striking things about a savage is that he has very little curiosity about him, and almost no possibility of admiring anything. The only thing that he admires is physical power,—power to achieve, that which is able to dominate him and make him fear. At the other extreme of life, among those who become artificial barbarians, you will find sometimes a *nil-admirari* type of man, who professes to have outgrown the possibility of being astonished at anything or admiring anything. We all know that that type of character is not admirable, but petty, mean, and contracted. He who stands in the presence of that which is admirable, and does not admire, measures with his criticism, not the thing itself, but his own stunted powers, his own lack of capacity to be touched, to be thrilled, to be lifted up. The noble man is the man with the capacity of admiring; and the more things he admires, the wider the range of his admiration, the nobler type of man must he be. He who admires literary excellence shows that there is in him some capacity to appreciate literary power. He who admires music shows that there is in him something of the musician that can be touched. He who admires a beautiful painting shows that there is in him at least the qualities of an artist. He who admires a fine bit of sculpture is thereby

lifted up above him who has no possibility for such admiration. So, in any department of thought or life, the more things a man is capable of admiring, the more points by which he comes into appreciative contact with the resources of the universe, the larger, wider, deeper, higher type of man he is. Is it, then, not clear that a man is measured by his ability as a worshipper?

WORSHIP A POWER OF TRANSFORMATION.

2. See what power this worship has in human life. It is a commonplace, and yet the most of us perhaps rarely trace it out to see how much it means, that a man attempts to imitate that which he admires. We have a saying that "imitation is the sincerest flattery." If a man admires something, and it is within the range of his power, it becomes a moulding, shaping influence in his life. It determines what sort of man he shall be. Let a man, for instance, have a certain poetical ability, and let him become a great admirer of Wordsworth, and those who listen to his song will detect the note of Wordsworth echoed in his poetical achievement. So let a man become the pupil of some great artist, and, in spite of himself, during his pupilage he will copy the qualities, the characteristics, of that artist. He may have it in him to outgrow his master some day and create a school of his own; but the point I wish to make is that we tend to copy, to become like that which we admire.

You are familiar, for example, with the story of Alexander the Great. He was a life-long admirer of Achilles. He carried the Iliad with him everywhere, slept with it under his head, and made Achilles his hero; and he was shaped into the likeness of that which he admired.

So this faculty in us that worships that which is above us is the mightiest power in us in the direction of character-moulding. And, if we love and admire that which is above us, do you not see how it becomes the power that creates for us a ladder before our feet and helps us to climb round after round towards the summit?

WORSHIP THE SECRET OF GROWTH.

3. One point more. Since this power of worship, this ability to admire that which is above and beyond us, moves us ever in an attempt to achieve that which we admire, right here is the secret of that which we boast as the characteristic of the noblest races of the world, — the secret of human perfection, the secret of all growth. The individual who admires nothing, worships nothing, is done. You expect nothing of him. It is he who is reaching out in all directions, admiring a thousand things that he has not yet attained, from whom you may expect new blossoming on every side. So the people, or the race, that is lured on and led by these ideals of the unattained, this dream of the better, — these are the people, these are the races, that

have within themselves the possibility and power of all growth.

IS WORSHIP, THEN, TO PASS AWAY?

Is worship, then, something that is to be left behind, that is no longer a part of the religious life of the world? Nay, it is the very noblest, the most important quality and characteristic of man. It is that which measures a man's greatness. It is that which has the power of reshaping his life to better issues. It is that which holds in itself the secret of the growth and the progress of all civilizations.

UNCONSCIOUS WORSHIP.

Now there is one more phase of the subject. There are a great many people in the modern world who think they are not worshippers, but who, in my judgment, are. There are thousands of persons who, if you speak to them about it, would say they do not worship. They question whether there is any place for worship in their nature. That which in ordinary religious parlance goes under the name of worship does not appeal to them. I cannot help sympathizing with those of you who feel this way. Most of that which passes for worship in the world does not appeal to me. I have gone into a cathedral in some foreign city, and if only the priests, the men who supposed they were conducting the worship, would have kept still, would have kept out of sight, I have felt I could worship there. I could

have been lifted by the beauty of the architecture. I could have been thrilled by the memories of the lives and the aspirations of those who piled these stones into these shapes of awe and wonder. But when I have heard the monotonous chanting of the priests, the droning, nasal sounds that have passed for worship, and have thought that that is repeated in hundreds and thousands of other churches every hour of the day and every day of the year, it has been such an unspeakable weariness to even think of it that I have tried to forget it. It has driven away from me every sense and feeling of that which to my heart and mind is worship. So a thousand other things that have passed for worship in the history of the past have not appealed and do not appeal to me now. They seem an unworthy degradation. I cannot think that God wants them; and I admire him the more because I think he does not. I could not admire and worship him if I thought he did want those things.

GRADES OF WORSHIP — NATURAL BEAUTY.

Worship is admiration, is wonder, in the presence of that which is above us. Let us note three grades of worshippers, illustrated by different types among men and women. I do not mean that certain persons worship in one way and not in another. I mean that certain persons are more easily touched by one of these methods than by another. What is it really that is taking place when we find our-

selves touched or lifted in the presence of some natural form of beauty, of grace, of grandeur and sublimity? When you hear Burns talk so tenderly as he does of the "wee, modest, crimson-tippet flower"; when you listen to Wordsworth, and find that his whole nature thrills and dances with the daffodils, or when you see him in the presence of the Eternal, thrilled with a feeling of that Presence that "disturbs him with the joy of elevated thoughts"; when you find a man like Byron, whom we do not think of as a worshipper, talking about the pleasure that he finds in the woods and on the shore; when you see him lifted out of himself and longing to become a part of the elementary power and wonder, as he witnesses the sublime scene of a thunder-storm in the Alps; when we find him in contemplation of the stars, saying,

> "Whoever looked upon them shining
> And turned to earth without repining,
> Nor wished for wings to flee away,
> And mix with their eternal ray";

or when ourselves on the seashore we find the tears start as we come into communion with the infinite sea, and find ourselves lifted above all care as we play with the breakers, or in the mountain awed in the presence of that which is sublime,— when we are touched by these moods of the forms or forces of nature, what is it but worship, admiration of beauty, of goodness, of power, of the invisible spiritual life manifested through them?

GRADES OF WORSHIP — HUMAN GOODNESS.

If we rise one step above natural beauty, natural power, and come into the ranges of the human, when we are lifted by some deed of heroism, and feel that some man has flung away his life in behalf of a cause, that he only has learned the secret of living, — when we are touched by these things that are grandest and finest in the human soul, what is it that we are doing but worshipping these manifestations of that divine and infinite life that finds partial expression in these fragmentary lives of ours?

GRADES OF WORSHIP — THE DIVINE IDEAL.

Climb above nature and humanity to the divine. If the human race is capable of ever coming to something grander than now exists, it is because we are able to commune with and worship the invisible, the intangible dreams and ideals that we name God. It is because we can worship something higher than we are, something higher than ever was incarnated in human life, that we can feel like falling on our knees in the invisible presence-chamber of God and taking the name on our lips which does not express, but only hints, the inexpressible. And since God, the invisible life, power, soul of all, is the one spring and source of all, since all that is grand in human nature and in human life, since all that is sublime or beautiful in nature, since these are only broken, partial expres-

sions, manifestations, of the invisible,— in worshipping these we are worshipping God. We are on the lower stairs perhaps; but it is a stairway by which we climb through darkness to God. So any soul that is capable of falling on its knees in the presence of anything felt to be greater, nobler, better, than itself, is a worshipper of God, and has within itself the promise and potency of eternal advance.

ALL WORSHIP LEADS TO GOD.

When, on some strain of music,
Our thoughts are wafted high;
When, touched with tender pity,
Kind tear-drops dim the eye;
When thrilled by scenes of grandeur
Or moved to deeds of love,
Do we not give thee worship,
O God in heaven above?

For thou art all life's beauty,
And thou art all its good;
By thy tides are we lifted
To every lofty mood.
Whatever good is in us,
Whatever good we see,
And every high endeavor,
Are they not all from thee?

Be it the organ's pealing,
Be it some mountain high,
Be it the swell of ocean,
Or calm of star-lit sky;
Be it the grace of childhood
Or look of human love,
All love of good is worship
That lifts toward God above.

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141 FRANKLIN STREET,
BOSTON.

Unitarian Catechism

BY

M. J. SAVAGE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY E. A. HORTON

Price, Paper, per Copy, ... 20 cents
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INTRODUCTION.

The preface by Mr. Savage gives the reasons, clearly and concisely, why a book like this is needed. It answers a great demand, and it will supply a serious deficiency. Having had the privilege of reading the contents very thoroughly, I gladly record my satisfaction in the character of the work, my hope of its wide acceptance and use, my appreciation of the author's motives in preparing it. The questions and answers allow of supplementing, of individual handling, of personal direction. It is not a hard-and-fast production. There is a large liberty of detail, explanation, and unfolding. The doctrinal positions are in accord with rational religion and liberal Christianity, the critical judgments are based on modern scholarship, and the great aim throughout is to assist an inquirer or pupil to a positive, permanent faith. If any one finds comments and criticisms which at first sight seem needless, let it be remembered that a Unitarian catechism must give reasons, point out errors, and trace causes: it cannot simply dogmatize. I am sure that in the true use of this book great gains will come to our Sunday-schools, to searchers after truth, to our cause.

EDWARD A. HORTON.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

This little Catechism has grown out of the needs of my own work. Fathers and mothers have said to me, "Our children are constantly asking us questions that we cannot answer." Perfectly natural! Their reading and study have not been such as to make them familiar with the results of critical scholarship. The great modern revolution of thought is bewildering. This is an attempt to make the path of ascertained truth a little plainer.

This is the call for help in the home. Besides this, a similar call has come from the Sunday-school. Multitudes of teachers have little time to ransack libraries and study large works. This is an attempt, then, to help them, by putting in their hands, in brief compass, the principal things believed by Unitarians concerning the greatest subject.

The list of reference books that follows the questions and answers will enable those who wish to do so to go more deeply into the topics suggested.

It is believed that this Catechism will be found adapted to any grade of scholars above the infant class, provided the teacher has some skill in the matter of interpretation.

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